

Send Letter to National Defense Authorization Act Conferees In Support of NFARS

Western New York Representatives Brian Higgins, Kathy Hochul, and Louise Slaughter [sent a letter](#) to Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, respectively, in support of the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act. The language in the House-passed version would enable the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) to maintain current capabilities by limiting funding made available for the retirement or realignment of C-130 aircraft.

“The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is a significant asset in Western New York,” said Congressman Higgins. “Maintaining the C-130 aircraft fleet is not only critical to the safety and security of our region, but also to the many whose jobs depend on NFARS maintaining full capabilities.”

“The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station serves as a crucial part of not only our national security, but the Western New York economy,” said Representative Hochul, a Member of the House Armed Services Committee. “The C-130s stationed at the Air Base stand ready to provide critical disaster relief and military services. The Western New York delegation will continue to work to ensure this base remains an integral part of our military’s long-term strategic plan.”

Slaughter said, “My Western New York colleagues and I know that the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is vital to the economy of Western New York and the security of the United States. We will continue to do everything we can to protect the local C-130 fleet and ensure a robust future for the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.”

In their letter, the Congressmembers note that NFARS’ C-130 fleet remains an essential component of our national security; earlier this year these aircraft carried personnel and supplies to areas of New York and New Jersey affected by Hurricane Sandy and in 2011, Western New York C-130 aircrafts flew over 1,500 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The text of their letter is below:

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain, Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

As Conferees to the National Defense Authorization Act we write in support of the tremendous effort that was made on the part of the U.S. House of Representatives to maintain the readiness of the Air National Guard in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. Language included in House passed version of H.R. 4310 maintains funding for personnel and much

needed transport capabilities that will keep the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve at a heightened state of readiness. The prohibition of retirement or realignment of aircraft will help to maintain the current capabilities of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve allowing them to contribute significantly to the national security of the United States and provide much needed response capability to the people of New York State and many other states.

We encourage you to maintain the language included in the House version of the bill that would limit funds from being made available for the retirement or realignment specifically of C-130 aircraft. We believe it is necessary to evaluate the size and scope of the current Air Force cargo fleet in consultation with local communities and the Governors of their prospective states.

We recently witnessed the destructive power of hurricane Sandy which destroyed thousands of homes and left millions stranded without supplies, electricity, or shelter. The men and women of the 107th Airlift Wing at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve station stood ready to aid in the recovery effort and support their fellow New Yorkers. 2,290 Airmen were deployed by Governor Cuomo and C-130 aircraft carried personnel and supplies within hours to affected areas of New York and New Jersey. In 2011 C-130 aircraft from Western New York flew over 1,500 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

These critical assets continue to be an essential part of our national security infrastructure guaranteeing quick responses to urgent needs. In many communities the Air National Guard is a crucial partner helping to provide jobs, homes, and economic security for thousands of Department of Defense personnel and their families.

We encourage you to prioritize the Air National Guard cargo fleet moving forward including fully funding the National Guard personnel that crew these aircraft and delay the retirement of C-130 aircraft until realistic plans and evaluations have been done to determine the national security impact and the challenges to states of reducing the current fleet.